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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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10/570,051

02/27/2006

Michihiro Yamagata

10873.1853USWO

3061

53148

7590

09/08/2009

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MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55402

EXAMINER

DINH, JACK

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2873

MAIL DATE

DELIVERY MODE

09/08/2009

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/570,051	YAMAGATA ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	JACK DINH	2873	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 27 May 2008.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-13 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 27 February 2006 is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☒ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>20060227</u> . | 6) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>DETAILED ACTION</u> . |

DETAILED ACTION

Drawings

1. Figure 12 should be designated by a legend such as --Prior Art-- because only that which is old is illustrated. See MPEP § 608.02(g). Corrected drawings in compliance with 37 CFR 1.121(d) are required in reply to the Office action to avoid abandonment of the application. The replacement sheet(s) should be labeled "Replacement Sheet" in the page header (as per 37 CFR 1.84(c)) so as not to obstruct any portion of the drawing figures. If the changes are not accepted by the examiner, the applicant will be notified and informed of any required corrective action in the next Office action. The objection to the drawings will not be held in abeyance.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

2. Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Nishikawa (US Patent 6,304,384).

Regarding claim 13, Nishikawa (figures 11A-11B-11C) discloses a method for manufacturing a microlens array comprising obtaining a microlens array **230** whose one surface is provided with a plurality of spherical or aspherical microlenses **236** and whose other surface is provided with grooves **238** in a lattice form and is flat except for the grooves, and processing

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lateral surfaces of the grooves to be black by injecting a solution **260** prepared by dissolving a black coating material in a solvent into the grooves.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

3. Claims 1-4 and 6-9 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (AAPA - Specification) in view of Uchiyama et al. (US Patent 6,839,178)

Regarding claim 1, AAPA (figure 12 – paragraph 0006) discloses an imaging apparatus comprising an imaging device comprising a plurality of pixels **113a** having a photoelectric conversion function, and a microlens array **111** comprising a plurality of microlenses **111a** that form subject images on the plurality of pixels in the imaging device and are arranged in a matrix, wherein the microlens array comprises light-shield partitions **112a** in a lattice form between the microlenses that are adjacent to each other. AAPA does not disclose that the microlens array comprises grooves wherein the depth of the grooves is larger than a half of a thickness of the microlens array. Within the same field of endeavor, Uchiyama (figures 2A-2B) discloses a microlens array **105** comprises light-shielding grooves **102** in a lattice form between the

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microlenses that are adjacent to each other, wherein the depth of the grooves is larger than a half of a thickness of the microlens array. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide a microlens array comprises light-shielding grooves in a lattice form between the microlenses that are adjacent to each other, wherein the depth of the grooves is larger than a half of a thickness of the microlens array, for the purpose of reducing cross talk and providing clear image.

Regarding claim 2, Uchiyama (figures 2A-2B; col. 8, lines 14-37) further discloses that the material of the microlens array comprises a light-transmitting resin.

Regarding claim 3, Uchiyama (figures 2A-2B; col. 8, lines 14-37) further discloses that the microlens array is a plano-convex lens array whose one surface is provided with the microlenses and whose other surface is provided with the grooves and faces the image device.

Regarding claim 4, Uchiyama (figures 2A-2B; col. 8, lines 14-37) further discloses that a light-absorbing material **102** is applied to lateral surfaces of the grooves.

Regarding claim 6, Uchiyama (figures 2A-2B; col. 8, lines 14-37) further discloses that the width of the grooves increases toward the imaging device.

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Regarding claim 7, Uchiyama (figures 2A-2B; col. 8, lines 14-37) further discloses that a second material having a smaller light transmittance than a first material forming the microlens array is filled in the grooves.

Regarding claim 8, Uchiyama (figures 2A-2B; col. 8, lines 14-37) further discloses that the second material comprises a material having a light-absorption function.

Regarding claim 9, AAPA in view of Uchiyama does not explicitly disclose that the second material has a larger refractive index than the first material. However, this would be obvious to one skilled in the art to avoid total-reflection from easily occurring. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide a larger refractive index for the second material for the purpose of preventing stray light.

4. Claims 5 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (AAPA - Specification) in view of Uchiyama et al. (US Patent 6,839,178), as applied in claim 4, and further in view of Nishikawa (US Patent 6,304,384).

Regarding claim 5, AAPA in view of Uchiyama does not explicitly disclose that the light-absorbing material is black. Within the same field of endeavor, Nishikawa (col. 10, line 64) discloses the teaching of a black light-absorbing material. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use black for

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light-absorbing material for the purpose of maximizing the light-absorbing functionality since darker colors absorb more light.

Regarding claim 10, AAPA in view of Uchiyama does not explicitly disclose that the microlens is manufactured by a resin molding. Within the same field of endeavor, Nishikawa (figures 10A & 10B) discloses of a microlens array **230** manufactured by resin molding. Therefore, it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to use black for light-absorbing material for the purpose of maximizing the light-absorbing functionality since darker colors absorb more light.

5. Claims 11 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nishikawa (US Patent 6,304,384).

Regarding claim 11, Nishikawa (figures 11A-11B-11C) discloses a method for manufacturing a microlens array, comprising obtaining by a resin molding a microlens array **230** whose one surface is provided with a plurality of spherical or aspherical microlenses **236** and whose other surface is flat, and forming grooves **238** in a lattice form on the other surface of the microlens array. Nishikawa does not disclose that the grooves are formed by light irradiation. However, the technique of forming grooves on a material using light irradiation is well-known in the art. Figures 2A-2B-2C discloses the teaching of grooves **25** formed by light irradiation. The strength of the irradiation or the wavelength of the radiation can be determined according to the irradiated material, which is within the knowledge of one skilled in the art. Therefore, it would

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have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to form the groove using light irradiation to help minimize manufacturing costs due to its popular.

Regarding claim 12, Nishikawa (figures IIA-11B-11C) further discloses the step of processing lateral surfaces of the grooves to be black by injecting a solution prepared by dissolving a black coating material **260** in a solvent into the grooves.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JACK DINH whose telephone number is (571)272-2327. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F (9:30 AM - 6:00 PM).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Ricky L. Mack can be reached on 571-272-2333. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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/Jack Dinh/

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